

State Board of Education
April 13, 2010
Item K

Team: Commissioner's Office; Research, Standards & Assessment

Discussion/Update Topic: Common Core Standards Initiative; ESEA Reauthorization

Alignment with Goals:

Goal I. Support high-quality, innovative instruction to improve student achievement

Objective A. All students achieving their full potential

Statutory Authority: 16 V.S.A. §164(9); SBE Rule

Background Information:

[National Common Core Standards](#)

Vermont is one of 48 states that signed a MOA in 2009 to work with CCSSO and the NGA in the development and adoption of a package of common standards K-12, culminating in College and Career-readiness Standards in mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening. The Common Core was released for public comment on March 10, 2010. VT-DOE invited teachers who have been involved with Vermont's current grade expectations and assessments through their work as regional network leaders to participate in a day-long review and comment of the Common Core. Mathematics network leaders met on March 29th and Literacy network leaders on March 30th. Teachers representing Career and Technical Centers and the Vermont Standards Board also participated. Sherry Gile from the VT-NEA joined the literacy review. Attached is an FAQ that was developed and has been posted on the DOE Web site and included in the Weekly Field Memo.

[ESEA Reauthorization](#)

Typically, each administration has an opportunity to update the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The current administration has issued a Blueprint for reauthorization for Congressional consideration.

Purpose of Discussion:

The purpose of the discussion is to update the SBE on the progress on the Common Core Standards development process and reauthorization.

Cost Implications:

Adopting the Common Core Standards will take need both monetary support and significant staff time to conduct alignment studies, revise materials, communicate and solicit public comment, develop or identify supporting materials, communicate and involve key partners in the work, identify a professional development strategy and identify roles and responsibilities for supporting educators in the transition. Fortunately, we are not alone in doing this – 47 other states will be working and sharing in the process.

Staff Available: Armando Vilaseca; Rae Ann Knopf

K-12 Common Core Standards FAQ -- March 22, 2010**

****This FAQ document will be updated as more information becomes available.**

1. What are the Common Core Standards? Who developed them?

The Common Core Standards Initiative (www.corestandards.org) has been led by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), working with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, among others. Last September they developed and put out for review the College and Career-readiness Standards that are intended to define the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses and work training programs.

Since December, Vermont DOE has reviewed several *confidential* drafts of math and ELA and sent feedback on these drafts to the CCSSO and the NGA.

On March 10, the initiative released K-12 Common Core Standards for Mathematics and K-12 Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science. These standards include and are intended to align with the College and Career-readiness Standards. The Common Core Standards are expected to be finalized in mid-April 2010.

2. What is the reason behind the Common Core Standards?

No Child Left Behind brought accountability -- but not necessarily consistency -- in the adoption of standards across state lines. As Americans have become more mobile, our children face increasing difficulty in moving from state to state or school to school, finding varying standards and related curriculum in the core areas of mathematics and language arts. The Common Core Standards Initiative is the beginning of a national effort to ameliorate those differences. Focused in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening, the Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked and designed to better prepare our young people for 21st century college and career opportunities.

3. Why is VT adopting them? What is the timeline for adoption?

Governors and State Commissioners of Education from 48 states, 2 territories and District of Columbia -- including Vermont -- signed Memoranda of Understanding in 2009 to develop and adopt these standards, a requirement linked to the acceptance of significant state funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Currently, DOE and the State Board are working through a formal process designed to lead to adoption of the Common Core Standards by the end of 2010.

4. Will there be a national assessment?

We do not yet have any indication from the US ED of how and when the Common Core Standards will be assessed. Sometime this spring, the US ED will put out a RFP for \$340,000,000 for assessment. How that RFP is written may tell us more about the future of state and/or national assessment. We expect that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will provide specific requirements for states.

5. What will be the impact on NECAP?

We do not expect any immediate impact and will continue with NECAP development and administration for the immediate future.

Upon finalization of the Common Core package, DOE will work with our partner states in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and Vermont stakeholders to conduct an alignment of our current *Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities* and associated state-assessed *Grade Expectations* in mathematics and literacy with the Common Core.

6. What will be the impact on local assessments and curriculum?

As soon as the Common Core is finalized, a complete alignment to our existing expectations will be conducted. This will more clearly define where shifts are needed. Schools districts that have recently completed or are completing alignments to current grade expectations may need to make some shifts.

7. How are the ELA Standards organized?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

- **Reading K – 5** is divided grade-by-grade into Literature (narratives, drama, and poetry) and Informational Text (literary nonfiction and information across content). Also includes Foundation Skills (K – 3).
- **Reading 6 - 12** has single-grade standards for 6, 7, and 8, while the high school years are clustered into 9-10 and 11-12. The CCR are repeated throughout the ELA standards. The texts are Literary and Literary Nonfiction. Foundation Skills (K – 6) become Language Skills.
- **Writing K – 8** has standards for narrative, informational, and argument, as well as research (which include responding to text).
- **Writing 9 – 12 and CCR** includes standards for information and argument only.
- **Speaking K – 12 and CCR**
- **Listening K – 12 and CCR**
- **Language Standards K – CCR** focus on Conventions and Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.

LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES and SCIENCE:

- **Reading Standards 6 – 12** are aligned with the College and Career-readiness standards but are focused on informational, content-specific text.
- **Writing Standards 6 – 12** are aligned with the College and Career-readiness standards but are focused on informative/explanatory and arguments focused on “*discipline-specific content.*”

8. How are the Math Standards organized?

The Common Core math standards are divided into two categories. These categories are: Standards for Mathematical Practice which apply to all grade levels and promote mathematical thinking and Specific Content standards organized by mathematical domains and grade levels

Math Standards K-5 are organized under the domains of

- Number – Counting and Cardinality, Operations and the Problems They Solve, Base Ten, Fractions
- Measurement and Data
- Geometry

Math Standards 6 – 8 is organized under the domains of

- Ratios and Proportional Relations
- The Number System
- Expressions and Equations
- Functions
- Geometry
- Statistics and Probability

Math Standards for High School is organized under Conceptual Categories of

- Number and Quantity
- Algebra and Functions
- Geometry
- Statistics and Probability
- Modeling

Appendix A contains drafts of model high school course descriptions based on the standards.

9. Do the Common Core Standards address the 21st Century skills?

While the Common Core Standards address skills such as “evaluating the accuracy and credibility of sources” and reference “online texts” in a number of places in ELA, many of what have been identified as 21st Century skills are found in the *VT’s Framework of Standards* in the *Vital Results* and *Learning Opportunities*. Therefore, we would be looking to work on a range of local assessments of these standards.

10. Are there future plans for developing Common Core Standards in other content areas?

We do not have any information on standards for other content areas at this time.



ESEA REAUTHORIZATION PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This policy statement presents a vision for a “new deal” to guide reauthorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

First, states must continue to lead the way with bold, thoughtful education reforms to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college and career. This includes developing and adopting higher, clearer, and fewer standards; improving state assessment systems; ensuring transparent, disaggregated accountability; building educationally rich data systems; strengthening teacher and leader effectiveness; and turning around underperforming schools.

In return and to succeed, we need a new federal education law that invests in these state efforts and encourages innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement—so that states can develop and implement policies to help districts and schools dramatically improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. This brief paper presents core principles and recommendations to guide ESEA reauthorization. More detailed legislative recommendations will follow.

THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions.

CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major education issues. The Council seeks member consensus on key educational issues and expresses their view to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

BACKGROUND

Education is the single most important key to success for individuals and our nation in a global economy.

We have long talked about the need for equity and excellence in education, but we have yet to live up to our rhetoric. In today's world, our ability to educate every child to high standards is a moral, democratic, and economic imperative.

Achieving our goals will require significant, holistic change and bold action. Incremental improvement is insufficient. We need dramatic and continuous improvement in student achievement for all learners, particularly poor and minority students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. This will require bold leadership, a focus on innovation, and a new form of state-federal partnership.

States are committed to leading in education reform, with a real commitment to high standards

ESEA reauthorization represents a great opportunity for a new vision and approach to achieve educational excellence and equity. We need to move beyond the important yet narrow goal of *no child left behind* to a goal of *every child a graduate*—prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and career as productive citizens of America's diverse interconnected society and a globally-interconnected world.

States are committed to leading in education reform, with a real commitment to high standards for all students. CCSSO, in partnership with the National Governors Association, is working to establish a

common core of standards in reading and mathematics that are higher, clearer, and fewer; aligned with college and work expectations; include rigorous content and 21st-century skills; and are internationally benchmarked. This state-led effort has significant implications beyond standards to aligned assessments, curricular materials, and professional development.

To achieve our educational goals, we need a new kind of federal law that supports state leadership. ESEA began in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty, providing additional funding to states and districts to enhance

To achieve our educational goals, we need a new kind of federal law that supports state leadership.

educational opportunities for disadvantaged students. With the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, ESEA transitioned toward promoting standards-based reforms. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accelerated that effort, establishing detailed requirements for standards, assessments, accountability determinations, school improvement, data reporting, and other areas, which apply similarly across all states and (in general) to all public schools within the states.

The federal government's strategy for NCLB implementation focused on ensuring fidelity to the prescriptions in the law; it only recently allowed for limited flexibility in some areas. Today states are coming together to lead, individually and through collective action, the development of improved policies that move beyond NCLB and establish conditions for districts and schools to promote dramatic improvements



in student achievement using innovative approaches. Federal law must encourage—not block—these state efforts.

Today we need a new ESEA that encourages state innovations in developing more effective policies that can dramatically improve student achievement and close achievement gaps—so that all children graduate from high school ready for college and career. President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan have stated their intent to move federal education policy in this direction. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's (ARRA's) state policy assurances and Race to the Top grants evidence the potential of this model, and states are responding with bold efforts and ideas.

The federal role in ESEA is *not* to codify a single “right” answer for national education policies, as if we know exactly what it takes to promote high achievement for all students in all contexts at scale. Rather we must infuse professional judgment back into the system and build a true partnership for education reform, with state leadership

and a federal law that is tight on ends but loose on means. We need a federal law that sets broad goals and criteria in core policy areas but encourages sound state policy innovation.

We need to authorize a new ESEA that promotes college and career ready expectations, focuses on equity, encourages innovation and continuous improvement, ensures transparent accountability, encourages coherence within and across federal laws, builds

We need a federal law that sets broad goals and criteria in core policy areas but encourages sound state policy innovation.

capacity in state education systems, and supports effective and timely research, evaluation, and dissemination of knowledge so that we can scale the most successful practices toward dramatic improvement for all children.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ESEA REAUTHORIZATION

Principle #1: Promote College and Career Readiness for All Students.

- States are leading the way toward college and career ready standards and expectations for all students to reflect the concepts and competencies necessary for success, through the common core state standards initiative.
- *The new ESEA should recognize state leadership by supporting the development and implementation of state assessments aligned to college and career ready standards.*

Principle #2: Maintain Focus on Equity and Core Investments.

- States recognize and embrace the shared responsibility inherent in ESEA to provide additional funding to enhance education opportunities for disadvantaged students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.
- *The new ESEA should increase investments in supports for disadvantaged students, as well as core foundations of standards-based reform such as improved data systems and assessments, access to highly effective teachers and leaders, and supports for underperforming districts and schools.*

Principle #3: Ensure Meaningful Accountability.

- States remain committed to ESEA's focus on accountability for student achievement and believe that performance expectations should be designed to move all children to college and career readiness.
- *The new ESEA should require states to establish systems of accountability based on core principles with transparent, disaggregated, actionable results, but otherwise rely on states to develop models of accountability that best improve student achievement toward college and career readiness in each state's context.*

Principle #4: Encourage Innovation in State Policy.

- States are moving well beyond the policy floor that ESEA established and share the common goal of identifying strategies that raise student achievement and close achievement gaps.

- *The new ESEA should set a baseline for state policy (in assessments, accountability, consequences, etc.) but support state innovation along with evaluation and cross-state communication to establish proof points and drive continuous improvement in policy and practice.*

Principle #5: Ensure Coherence and Reduce Burden in and across Federal Law.

- Current federal education laws operate in silos—from law to law, program to program, and agency to agency—encouraging the same systems at the state level to respond to duplicative federal requirements.
- *The new ESEA should encourage coordinated state action—across federal laws, policy areas, and states, from birth to K–12 to higher education—by permitting consolidated planning and reporting to a single office in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) that manages all data requests and collections to avoid duplication, ensure usefulness, and promote coherence.*

Principle #6: Build Capacity to Support Comprehensive State Policy Reforms.

- States now play the leading role in developing, enacting, implementing, assisting, monitoring, reviewing, and improving education policy reforms, but ESEA has not responded with investment to support developing high-performing systems of education leadership.
- *The new ESEA should provide increased support for state education agencies to implement the core*

foundations of standards-based reform and build high-performing systems necessary to achieve high goals for all students.



Principle #7: Increase and Improve Investments in Research and Dissemination of Knowledge.

- To promote efficient and effective education reform, and fully leverage the potential of an innovative approach, we need to improve the development and sharing of knowledge—across states and districts and including international benchmarking.
- ***The new ESEA*** should increase investment and promote new models of research, evaluation, state coordination, technical assistance, and dissemination of lessons learned by bringing even greater clarity and depth to the range of federal entities (i.e., centers and labs) that are funded to support state policy and research efforts and by investing in a range of research and evaluation as a key component of policy reform.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESEA REAUTHORIZATION

Based on the guiding principles above, the following are core recommendations for ESEA reauthorization. These include overarching recommendations that apply to the law as a whole, as well as specific recommendations in four core areas of reform: standards, assessments, and accountability; data and reporting; teachers and leaders; and supports for next-generation learning. These four areas represent CCSSO's core policy pillars and are greatly consistent with both the ARRA's core policy "assurances" and NCLB's major policy areas. The

These recommendations are premised on the new state-federal partnership, in which federal law becomes leverage for state policy leadership.

recommendations below address the areas of highest priority for standards-based reforms, including areas not fully addressed under current federal law.

It is important to understand that this is not an invitation for federal micromanagement or heavy regulation in these areas—just the opposite. These recommendations are premised on the new state-federal partnership outlined above, in which federal law becomes leverage for state policy leadership.

Core ESEA Recommendations

Overarching Recommendations.

Today we are raising the bar on education to move all students to college and career readiness. Achieving this goal requires a new form of state-federal partnership, with a new focus on innovation, capacity, and coherence across ESEA.

1. Make innovation a driving force of ESEA and the work of ED by amending NCLB's "waiver authority" to adopt a "state innovation authority" applicable across the act. States should be encouraged to develop and submit new policy models in assessment, accountability, supports and interventions, teacher effectiveness, etc. The U.S. secretary of education *shall* approve new policy models on the basis of sound, meaningful peer review.
2. Reinvent peer review as a core part of the new state-federal partnership to ensure that it is an engine of state innovation, particularly as states transition to new accountability models. This includes assembling a range of experienced peers, ensuring deference to state education judgments, promoting transparent evaluation and direct communication with states, and disseminating lessons learned.
3. Create new investments for enhancing integrated systems of reform across state policy by raising "administrative caps." Create a new systems enhancement grant program to promote coordinated state policy action (as in ARRA's Race to the Top as well as other federal laws, such as the Head Start Act's State Advisory Councils).
4. Establish broader buckets of funding streams around common purposes and create a new authority for state flexibility that allows state education agencies to consolidate programs and funding (of or below an established dollar amount or percent of Title I funding level), within ESEA and across other federal laws and agencies (with a particular focus on breaking down barriers between early learning, K–12, and higher education).
5. Increase investments and improve systems for research, evaluation, and dissemination of knowledge. This includes increasing support for program evaluation across ESEA (particularly as part of a "state innovation authority") as well as providing support for state networks in key policy areas. This may also require reviewing and revising ESRA along with ESEA to improve federal research efforts and make much more transparent and useful to states the full range of centers and labs available to support state leadership.

Core ESEA Recommendations (continued)

Standards, Assessment, and Accountability.

Based in part on NCLB, all states now have in place standards for reading & language arts and mathematics, assessments aligned to state standards, and accountability for all schools and districts, with disaggregated data by subgroup. CCSSO's common core effort is moving states even further. States should be expected to adopt standards aligned with college and career expectations and report certain elements as part of annual accountability determinations (results from assessments aligned to college and career ready standards, accurate graduation rates [using common reporting protocols], disaggregated data, etc). Federal law must improve adequate yearly progress (AYP) as well and its one-size-fits-all approach. Federal law should encourage states to define AYP based on multiple measures of student achievement and to differentiate categories and consequences in a manner that is most educationally sound in each state's context.

6. Base accountability primarily on school improvement and student progress (growth, value added, indexing compensatory, etc.) over time towards the goal of all students graduating college and career ready (including English language learners and students with disabilities). Encourage states to build valid models of diagnostic analysis (e.g., "inspectorate," accreditation, or other systems of evaluation) that target a range of supports and interventions.
7. Allow states to establish accountability systems that meet certain core principles (e.g., align to college and career readiness, focus on student achievement, include annual assessments, disaggregate results, etc.) and work best in each state's context to raise achievement and close gaps, including innovative models that utilize learning progressions or grade span design. ED should establish a standing process to peer review proposed state accountability systems based on rigorous review, trust for state professional judgment, and encouragement of innovation. In particular, ED should afford significant flexibility to states in transitioning assessment and accountability systems as they adopt college and career ready standards and the common core.
8. Maintain current investments in state assessments and further support the movement toward college and career ready standards, funding the creation of aligned, enhanced assessment systems. New instrumentation should be fully representative of the richness of standards and sensitive to gaps in learning that may have occurred earlier in a student's development tract.

Core ESEA Recommendations (continued)

Information Systems and Research.

NCLB highlighted inequities across key student populations by requiring the comprehensive collection and transparent reporting of disaggregated assessment and accountability data. Through ESRA, federal law has complemented state investments in the creation of longitudinal data systems. But continued investment is necessary to build the next generation of integrated, interoperable state systems, and to improve data use to drive policy and practice. This requires several reforms:

9. Continue funding the creation of enhanced P–20 data systems that utilize unique student identifiers to track student growth over time, and that provide timely, actionable data to inform instruction practices and guide school improvement strategies, and support professional development regarding the use of data to drive instruction. Ensure links across early childhood, K–12, higher education, and workforce data systems, and address provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act to protect student privacy while promoting effective use of data to improve outcomes across education entities.
10. Establish a single comprehensive reporting office in ED that manages all data requests and collections, with the mission of avoiding duplication, reducing burden, and ensuring value. These data collections should also follow common data definitions and elements established in concert with the states through CCSSO's EIMAC and the Data Quality Campaign (i.e., the "coordinated data ask").
11. Shift the state longitudinal data systems competitive grant program from IES (authorized in ESRA) to a new formula program to support the continual investment required for improved data systems and meaningful accountability.

Core ESEA Recommendations (continued)

Education Workforce.

NCLB rightly sought to ensure that highly qualified teachers were serving students in all core academic subjects. Unfortunately, “highly qualified” was narrowly defined as basic academic attainment and performance on subject-matter tests. HQT was a one-size-fits-all approach that failed to best meet the needs of students with disabilities and rural communities. Moreover, current law failed to focus efforts around the concept of effectiveness as the true barometer of classroom impact. A new ESEA should:

12. Maintain HQT’s core components and encourage more meaningful focus on educator effectiveness by requiring states to set professional standards and ensure that districts establish meaningful teacher and principal evaluation systems based on multiple measures that include returns on student achievement (which can be based on multiple data points) and that districts show progress in increasing access to highly effective teachers. Acting within core criteria, states and districts should have flexibility in establishing the evaluation systems and goals as core state and local responsibilities. Where schools do not improve teacher effectiveness *and* do not meet student achievement goals, districts should be required to target school improvement and/or professional development funds to proven strategies for improving teacher effectiveness.
13. Invest heavily in improving teachers and leaders and elevating the profession by funding ongoing quality improvement across the continuum of educator policies—from recruitment to preparation to induction to professional development to career pathways, etc. The new ESEA should also build on the Teacher Incentive Fund to support incentives for highly effective teachers and those who teach in high-need schools or disciplines, particularly STEM.

Core ESEA Recommendations (continued)

Next Generation Learners.

NCLB focused great attention on the front end of standards-based reform, but only recently has focus been placed on the resources necessary for turning around underperforming schools and dramatically improving student learning progress and graduation rates across all schools. The face of education is changing to include new efforts toward personalized, anytime/everywhere learning. The new ESEA must be child-focused rather than building- or school-based and commit to improving opportunities to learn as well as accountability for results. This includes:

14. Sustain and increase funding for school improvement grants and increase support for states to build district capacity as a core part of school improvement. Implement continuation funding (perhaps at reduced levels on a sliding scale) for schools that cease to be eligible for school improvement funds as their classifications change in order to eliminate the disincentive for increased student achievement.
15. Create a new early childhood funding stream tied to expanding access to quality programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children and aligned with high standards for children's learning and development, as envisioned in the Early Learning Challenge Fund, (soon to be) created under the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act.
16. Create a new literacy initiative formula program that spans birth through graduation and supports state- and school-based literacy efforts. Federal law should further fund corresponding high-quality professional development of teachers aligned to this new initiative.
17. Support a network of state innovation labs to design, pilot, and evaluate birth through graduation personalized, performance-based learning systems and expand learning opportunities through the use of "anytime/everywhere" community partnerships.
18. Enhance other core investments, including increased support for extended learning time and response to intervention, integration of community and student support services, increased use of technology to drive innovative practices in teaching and learning, and increased access to effective curriculum and instruction, including the expansion of broadband access.



One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700 | Washington, DC 20001-1431 | Phone (202) 336-7000 | Fax (202) 408-8072

For more information about Council of Chief State School Officers, please visit www.ccsso.org



***ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)
REAUTHORIZATION***

***CORE PRINCIPLES AND
RECOMMENDATIONS***

PREAMBLE

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) believes our country's citizens are the nation's most valuable resource. Providing a high-quality public education is of paramount importance to the country's economic strength and global competitiveness, its national security, the preservation of its democratic society, and the overall well-being of its citizens.

American fundamental values insist that every citizen has the opportunity for success, irrespective of background or genealogy. The country grows stronger when all Americans have access to opportunity and are able to participate fully in our economy. The country's commitment to equal educational opportunity means that schools must address the educational, social, and personal needs of diverse sets of students, including different racial and ethnic groups, both genders, and students with special needs. In addressing equal educational opportunity, the federal government must work to protect the constitutional and civil rights of all students and school personnel. State and territorial boards of education must strive for excellence without forsaking equity and strive for equity without forsaking excellence.

Public education is important to the country's economic strength and global competitiveness. Our country needs to provide an internationally-benchmarked, public education system that produces students who are college- and career-ready and able to successfully compete with their academic counterparts in other countries.

Given the importance of public education as the foundation of our country's national security, its vibrant economy, and a democratic society, NASBE believes the federal government has a primary responsibility to recognize the national interests and goals in education and provide the support necessary to ensure that those goals are being met. The federal government should provide this support while allowing states, the District of Columbia, and the American territories the freedom to develop and implement policies according to their individual circumstances. Goals can and should be national; the choice of means must be state and local. NASBE supports the current Administration's objective through ESEA reauthorization to be "tight on goals, but loose on means" to specifically provide states the flexibility in their implementation efforts. Further, federal legislation, regulations, and the distribution of federal funds must be respectful of and not conflict with state and territorial statutes and constitutions that establish education governance and accountability. The federal government should not mandate or promote advisory groups that duplicate or impinge upon state and territorial board of education functions.

The current iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act establishes an unprecedented level of federal involvement in state education decision-making. While state boards of education agree with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act's emphasis on educating all children and closing the achievement gaps among racial, ethnic, and socio-economic subgroups of students, state and territorial boards of education do not agree with the one-size-fits-all micromanagement of the nation's 95,000 public schools and the enormous and unproductive bureaucratic burdens this has placed on states, school districts, schools, administrators, and educators.

NASBE urges that Congress reauthorize ESEA in 2010 in a way that supports existing state education reforms, builds state capacity, and provides flexibility to states in implementing the law's provisions. NASBE supports the Administration's objectives, through on-going American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding efforts and ESEA reauthorization efforts, to encourage states to implement more rigorous standards, raise student achievement levels, close the achievement gap, and increase high school graduation rates.

However, NASBE members believe that states must continue to lead the way to meet those objectives by strengthening state standards and implementing comprehensive, balanced assessment systems designed to improve student learning; developing longitudinal data systems to measure students' growth over their entire school careers; and building responsive accountability systems designed to recognize and reward success in realizing those objectives. States and territories also must lead the way to improve educator and leader effectiveness and ensure their equitable distribution to high-need schools. Further, states and territories must identify and turn around their chronically, low-performing schools.

Congress has neglected to reauthorize ESEA since 2007. Further delay of reauthorization sends an unmistakable, negative message to the public about the priority Congress places on the country's economic strength, global competitiveness, and national security.

Please note that any reference to states also includes the District of Columbia and the American territories.

For more information on ESEA Reauthorization, please contact Tony Shivers, Director of Government Affairs, at (703) 740-4824 or tonys@nasbe.org. Further information about NASBE and State Boards of Education can be found at www.nasbe.org.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR ESEA REAUTHORIZATION

This document revises the set of ESEA reauthorization guiding principles that were adopted by NASBE in 2007 based upon its assessment of further developments in the implementation of NCLB and current state reforms. This document also provides specific recommendations on key issues in the current law. These core principles and recommendations do not specifically address all the issues involved in the current law, nor are they meant to. Rather, they represent the fundamental priorities identified by state and territorial boards of education for any federal education reforms.

Principle One

Increase federal investment in state capacity

This would help solidify the state-federal partnership to raise student achievement levels, close the achievement gap, increase high school graduation rates, turn around chronically low-performing schools, improve educator and leader effectiveness, and ensure all children are college- and career-ready. States have lost their capacity over the years due to, among other factors, significant belt-tightening in the face of the down economy and little additional federal assistance. State educational agencies need to be revitalized with more highly-trained staff and resources to accomplish the true reforms.

Principle Two

Renew the federal and state commitment to equal education opportunity by adequately funding Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other existing targeted federal education programs

This would help address the educational, social, and personal needs of our nation's diverse set of students, including different racial and ethnic groups, females and males, students with disabilities, English language learners, and disadvantaged students along the entire academic continuum and ensure their access to highly effective educators and leaders as well as ensure their success in college- and career. When Congress enacted IDEA more than thirty (30) years ago, it set a target for the federal contribution to special education spending to be equal to 40 percent of the estimated excess cost of educating children with disabilities. However, current federal funding covers only about 18 percent of the estimated excess cost of educating children with disabilities. Further, the federal government shall not make Title I funding contingent on states adopting competitive funding reforms such as common core standards.

Principle Three

Support states in their development and implementation of rigorous college- and career-ready standards across core curricula and comprehensive, balanced assessment systems aligned to those standards

States are leading the way to define 21st century learning in terms of fewer, clearer, and higher standards that identify what students need to know and do when they graduate from high school. States will need support as they move towards aligning core curricula, instructional materials, and educator and leader professional development to more rigorous standards.

Principle Four

Strengthen state and federal accountability systems

State and federal accountability systems should have clear incentives and motivate students, educators and leaders to achieve high standards of performance and based on multiple measures producing accurate, meaningful, and valid results. States should have the flexibility to use growth model measures designed to move all students towards college- and career- readiness.

CORE PRINCIPLES (continued)

Principle Five

Help states meet their needs for highly-effective educators and leaders in high-need schools and in high-need subject areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Ensure states have the capacity to provide the necessary professional development and supports to these educators and leaders as well as encourage states to establish alternative, high-quality pathways for working professionals to become highly effective educators and leaders.

Principle Six

Eliminate the burden on states to comply with federal requirements unnecessary or duplicative of other existing federal requirements.

The federal government should limit reporting requirements to those necessary to account for funding, to demonstrate compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, and to assist in determining the most effective use of federal funding.

Principle Seven

Increase federal investment in research, evaluation and dissemination of developments and best practices to all states in curriculum, teaching, learning and the management of schools.

The federal government should be instrumental in collecting and analyzing data, statistics, and information about education and sharing that information with states as well as providing appropriate technical assistance.

ESEA REAUTHORIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS (2010)

ACCOUNTABILITY

Federal Role: To provide states with resources and assistance within federal education laws and hold states accountable for results, while giving states the flexibility to determine the manner in which they reach the goals specific in federal education laws.

- State and federal accountability measures should serve as the basis for a full range of responses that include capacity building and robust interventions for struggling students and schools in addition to specific awards for progress and success as opposed to sanctions.
- States should have the flexibility to utilize multiple qualitative and quantitative measures, including student growth over time across the entire achievement continuum, as well as other indicators of school progress. The accountability index or composite should include long-term data that measure whether or not students have been effectively prepared for college or the workplace, including graduation data, college or workplace entry, and college completion.
- States should have the flexibility to develop and maintain accountability systems that perform the following functions: 1) focus on how the system (including school, district, and state levels) performs in a number of key areas; 2) make use of multiple indicators, of which summative assessment is only one; 3) provide multiple ways to reward success; and 4) be flexible enough to accommodate future changes.
- State and federal accountability systems should be based on broad political, business, and community support so they can be sustained over time, yet also be adaptable to necessary changes.

COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Federal Role: To provide funding for research and financial support for the consortia of states in their development and implementation of common standards and related assessments that are more rigorous, aligned with college- and career-readiness expectations, and internationally benchmarked. NASBE supports the current efforts of a national consortium of education organizations and states in its effort to develop high-quality, rigorous and voluntary common standards for students across the country. The intent is to develop common standards that specify grade-level expectations based on valid, reliable research for predicting valued performances that are internationally-benchmarked and grounded on the latest advances in the sciences of thinking and learning.

- Allow states to voluntarily participate in common standards development efforts.
- Do not require the adoption of any common standards by individual states as a condition for the receipt of federal aid.
- Recognize that the State Boards of Education are at the heart of the open and inclusive common standards adoption process.
- Recognize that while common standards are an important reform, they are not likely by themselves to result in higher student achievement without concurrent state implementation efforts that include improved educator development and induction processes, aligned instructional materials and assessments, and robust student intervention systems for those struggling to meet standards.

- Encourage states to develop common standards that address the educational, social, and personal needs of diverse sets of students, including different racial and ethnic groups, both genders, and students with special needs.
- Incentivize states to use common standards as a catalyst for lowering barriers for educator certification reciprocity among states.

BALANCED ASSESSMENTS

***Federal Role:** Provide adequate funding, evidence-based research, and flexibility to states to develop a new generation of assessments that are aligned to common standards. These new assessments must adequately address the longstanding issues regarding disparities in education and the demand for a well-educated workforce for the 21st century. NASBE supports the efforts of consortia of states in their efforts to develop comprehensive, balanced assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards.*

- Provide states with the flexibility to develop assessment systems that are designed to improve student learning. Recognizing that no single test serves all purposes, states should have the flexibility to create comprehensive, balanced assessment systems that includes both assessment *of* learning (reporting on what's been learned) as well as assessments *for* learning (providing ongoing feedback to educators and students as learning progresses). The assessments—summative, formative, interim—should function as a coherent system that uses a variety of approaches to integrate assessment as part of the fabric of classroom teaching.
- Provide states with the flexibility to utilize growth and value-added assessments models to improve teaching and learning, evaluate programs, and provide for effective equitable resource allocations.
- Incentivize states to shift more of their attention to classroom-based assessments that permit a finer-grain analysis of student understanding through the use of a variety of performance-based tasks (e.g., open-ended responses, demonstration projects, portfolios, technology-based items).
- Incentivize states to provide state assessment results that indicate user-friendly, transparent information to leaders, educators, parents, and students that clearly describe differences in learning in a subject area in order to communicate effectively about student performance.
- Require states to develop appropriate assessments and accommodations for special education students and English language learners through extensive research and testing to ensure they are of high technical quality.
- Incentivize states to participate in national and state-level international assessments such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in order to examine student attainment in an international context and thereby ensure that students are receiving an education that prepares them for the 21st century global economy.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS

***Federal Role:** Share responsibility with the states to ensure that all school leaders have the skills, knowledge, and attributes to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently; that they continue to improve professionally throughout their careers; and ensure that all schools and essentially all children have access to these effective leaders. Schools across the nation face an increasing number of vacancies in the leadership position, with fewer applicants for these jobs. Yet the need for effective leaders is greater than ever. Factors contributing to the leadership shortage include increasing job responsibilities and time commitments; increased pressure to improve school performance; lack of the necessary autonomy and supports; and, in some systems, insufficient pay or recognition. NASBE supports the development and application of standards and competencies in a cohesive system for recruiting, preparing, licensing, supporting, and evaluating effective leaders with an emphasis on instructional leadership.*

- Encourage states to set professional standards that specify clear expectations for what leaders need to know and be able to do to function as instructional leaders critical to improving schools and raising student learning and achievement.
- Incentivize states to improve the quality of their leader preparation programs. Such programs should assess their impact on the effectiveness of school administrative and education leaders in improving instruction, student achievement, and school performance.
- Encourage states to develop performance-based leadership evaluation systems for purposes of initial and advanced (tiered) licensure and that provides feedback to school leaders and preparation programs, and to design professional development and supports for school leaders.
- Provide appropriate resources to help states provide ongoing support for their new school leaders through robust state mentoring and induction programs.
- Encourage states to develop and maintain school administrative models that foster distributed leadership and provide the necessary support, compensation, and decision-making autonomy commensurate with their responsibilities.

EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS

***Federal Role:** Share a responsibility with the states to ensure that all educators have the skills, knowledge, and attributes to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently; that they continue to improve professionally throughout their careers; and ensure that all schools and essentially all children have access to these effective educators.*

Educator Development, Supply, and Demand

- Provide scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to attract high-performing college students into careers in public education.
- Encourage states to develop highly- effective, standards-based systems of educator preparation, evaluation, and development while recruiting promising educator candidates.
- Encourage states to continue to develop policies that improve educator retention, distribution, and diversity.
- Encourage states to continue to develop licensure and certification programs that require educators to demonstrate progressively higher-level knowledge and skills to help students achieve high standards.

- Incentivize states to work in regional and national groups to raise the quality of teaching, in recognition of the fact that educators and students move from state to state.

Educator Preparation

- Provide appropriate resources to states to help them improve educator preparation programs that include clearly articulated standards, methods of evaluation, and accountability measures framed with a focus on the effective delivery of instruction for the achievement of common standards within the K-12 systems.
- Encourage states to improve educator preparation programs that include varied, early, and sustained clinical experiences.
- Encourage states to require all beginning educators to participate in supervised entry-year programs. The programs should be cooperative efforts between educator education programs and local school districts.

Educator Licensure and Certification

- Recognize that states have authority over educator licensure and certification and to ensure that these policies are fully integrated within the state education program.
- Recognize that states have the authority to provide initial approval to educators based on completion of a state-approved educator education program (or alternative educator preparation program) and their demonstration of in-depth knowledge in specific content area, clinical skills, child development, methods of differentiated instruction, and classroom management.
- Provide state flexibility to limit and seek to eliminate the use of emergency certification.
- Provide state flexibility to develop proficiency-based approval for educator education programs framed with a focus on the effective delivery of instruction for achievement of common standards within the K-12 system. Policies on alternative approaches to certification must represent high standards and expectations in terms of knowledge of content area and clinical skills and experience.
- Require states to establish a process to examine the background, including any criminal record, of all school personnel to ensure they do not pose a threat to the emotional, psychological, or sexual well-being of students.

Educator Professional Development

- Provide adequate support to help states provide high-quality, educator professional development programs throughout educators' careers through the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) and other federal education funding streams.
- Encourage states to allow their educators to develop professional development programs in conjunction with school district representatives in order to meet the identified needs of the educator, the school district, and the individual school.

Educator Evaluation Systems

- Encourage states to develop and maintain educator evaluation systems that strengthen the performance of practicing educators and be partly tied to student performance.
- Provide states flexibility to develop educator evaluation systems that are integrated with local goal setting, testing, and staff development activities.

STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

***Federal Role:** To provide appropriate resources to states so they can continue providing longitudinal data-management systems that measure students' progress over time and that educators and parents can project whether a student is on a path to proficiency, college- and career-readiness, and other important benchmarks along a PK-20 continuum.*

Incentivize states and provide state flexibility to develop data systems that perform the following functions:

- Matches educator and student data;
- Holds preparation programs accountable for the performance of educators they prepare and license;
- Provides data on success rate of students' transition from secondary school to postsecondary education;
- Identifies factors that correlate to students' ability to successfully engage in and complete postsecondary-level general education coursework; and
- Informs education policies and practices in order to better align state academic content standards and curricula with the demands of postsecondary education and the 21st century workforce.

TURNAROUND OF CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

***Federal Role:** To increase its investment in school improvement research, evaluation and dissemination of best practices to all states and partner with states, school districts, and individual schools to bring successful outcomes to a larger scale. More and more schools each year are failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB. As a result, states face burdensome sanctions and a lack of technical assistance from the federal government to effectively help their schools improve. The objective is for states to continue to work to develop comprehensive, statewide plans for improving their chronically lowest-performing schools.*

Provide the necessary resources to states to help them develop intervention strategies to perform the following functions:

- Build district capacity to turn around schools and to make investments in leadership, particularly at the school level;
- Develop strategies for building the capacity of state education agencies to ensure they are able to carry out the states' plan to help districts improve low-performing schools;
- Provide guidance to school districts on turnaround options, their research base, and conditions and environments where they were proven to be successful;

- Adopt requirements that all schools develop school improvement plans which can be approved by the local education agencies and the state education agencies;
- Develop systems for tracking, analyzing, and disseminating results of ongoing restructuring efforts;
- Develop options for schools that continue to miss benchmarks after restructuring; and
- Provide on-going support for schools that exit restructuring

SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Federal Role: To provide states with research-based resources and technical assistance so their can provide their students with a healthy, safe and engaging education environment that prepares them for college and career. The focus should move away from high schools reform to the redesign of middle and high schools together. States, school districts, and individual secondary schools should be held more accountable in preparing students to achieve both in postsecondary education and in the workforce without remediation. Lastly, resources should be focused on attracting and maintaining highly-qualified, effective, and innovative educators and innovative leaders essential in turning around secondary schools.

- Incentivize states to increase the rigor of academic standards and high school graduation requirements to a college- and career-ready level; and offer students other high-quality pathways, such as career and entrepreneurial education and dual enrollment, that prepare them for college and entry-level technical occupations.
- Strengthen federal and state accountability measures by requiring secondary school accountability systems to be tied to college- and career-ready measures; and aligning postsecondary expectations, incentives, and performance to secondary school expectations.
- Encourage states to improve schools by providing excellent educators and leaders by connecting educator preparation, hiring, and evaluation to student outcomes, among other factors; and empowering leaders to hire and assign educators.

SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Federal Role: To support the work of the states to ensure that schools are safe and healthy environments. Research has shown that healthy students are better students, and that health and nutrition are directly linked to a student's attendance at school and ability to learn to high standards. These facts are at the heart of NASBE's nearly two decade long leadership efforts in promoting school health policies, emphasizing the links between academic performance and safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments, and drawing national attention to the role of schools in ensuring the physical well-being of their students.

- Encourage states to require health goals in school improvement plans consistent with local wellness policies.
- Incentivize states to utilize student data systems to track both academics and health outcomes.

- Encourage states to create environments that support coordinated school health including improving nutrition environments, physical activity/ quality physical education opportunities, improved evidence-based sexual health education and support, and health education.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

***Federal Role:** To fully-fund Head Start for all eligible children across the nation. Evidence-based research shows that high-quality early childhood education has significant long-term benefits for lifetime learning. It is a cost-effective strategy for reducing expenditures on special education and remedial services, improving student achievement and increasing graduation rates. NASBE supports a wide variety of public, voluntary, and private arrangements for pre-kindergarten programs backed by a statewide vision for high quality early education.*

Encourage state pre-kindergarten systems to contain the following characteristics:

- Aligned, comprehensive pre-kindergarten through grade three early learning standards;
- Core requirements and standards for programs and professional development that reflect the research on effective early learning and development and address the capacity of programs to deliver quality instruction;
- Accountability measures based on a continuous improvement approach that includes ongoing evaluation to assess a program's plan for meeting early learning needs, the quality of its implementation, its impact on children and families, and its alignment with K-grade three assessments. Accountability systems should use multiple age-appropriate indicators of both how children are progressing and the quality dimensions of classrooms so that needed improvements and professional development can be identified;
- State standards for educators and preparation programs that require early childhood education educators to have a Bachelor's degree and specialized early childhood training at the college level consistent with a common vision of high-quality early education; and
- Plans for increasing access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs, beginning with children from low-income families.

SCHOOL INNOVATION

***Federal Role:** To encourage states to be innovative and provide flexibility for states to increase high school graduation rates, close the achievement gap, and raise student achievement levels. The federal government should help states and build their schools as dynamic education institutions that graduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the world. This requires a long-term commitment of time, energy, and resources at the federal, state, and local level.*

Charter Schools

- Recognize that the authority to grant public school charters primarily lies with the states and/or school districts. States and/or school districts have the ultimate oversight of all publicly-funded schools, including charter schools.
- Allow states to determine the appropriate number of charter schools in their states without adverse consequences and not tie federal education funding to the states' number of charter schools or laws that cap the number of charter schools in a given state.

- Encourage state charter laws, policies, and procedures to address students' diverse learning needs, including those of students with disabilities.
- Encourage states to prevent charter schools from becoming instruments for the segregation of students based on the level of their academic ability or socio-economic status.
- Encourage states to ensure every public charter school:
 - is nonsectarian and not-for-profit, does not assess families for additional tuition, and actively informs families of their opportunities to apply for admission and admits students on the basis of a lottery if more students apply than can be accommodated;
 - is governed by an independent board knowledgeable about education and exercising full fiduciary responsibility;
 - submits sound instructional, academic assessment, staffing, financing, facilities, and fiscal management plans to its sponsoring entity;
 - meets or exceeds state-determined content standards, is subject to state academic accountability requirements, and provides an annual audit and reports on audit results, student learning results and other indicators of school performance to its sponsoring agency;
 - endeavors to foster a cooperative relationship with its local school district;
 - employs qualified educators and administrators as per state and federal requirements; and
 - complies with all applicable federal, state, and local civil rights, public health, and safety laws and regulations, including those concerning the education of students with disabilities.

Community Schools

- Provide states the resources and flexibility to open public education facilities beyond the traditional school day to provide academic, extra-curricular, recreational, health, social services, and work force preparation programs for people of all ages.
- Encourage states to play an active role in fostering community schools by developing and/or supporting school-community programs, advocating the flexible use of state and local funds to allow for pooling of resources from different agencies and sources, and garnering support for community schools by promoting their benefits through policy statements, public dialogue, and testimony.

Choice Among Public Schools

- Encourage states to ensure their students and families have equal access to quality schools and choice among programs.
- Encourage states to foster innovation and a variety of quality education options for students.
- Encourage states to ensure that all students and families are actively informed about the alternative educational options available to them.